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# Durbar Bulletin -70

## Nachni-the folk art of Manbhum

Kolkata is observing the World Heritage Week to create awareness about the importance of conservations of heritages. The week long program was celebrated from 19<sup>th</sup> November 2016 to 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2016 on Victoria Memorial Ground.

On 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2016, the folk song and dance program named 'Jhumur' and 'Nachni' of Purulia was staged at the south lawn of Victoria Memorial. The dance and song numbers were performed by Postobala Devi Karmakar, Shila Devi Jogi and other members of Manbhum Lok O Sanskriti and Nachni Unnayan Committee. It was a historic day for the 'Nachnis' because the platform where they performed attracts highest footfall in India.

The Nachni, the folk art dancers are living in a difficult situation and their art form appears to be losing its steam and patronage. The situation of the impoverished Nachni dancers received any support from outside till Durbar Mahila Samanwaya Committee helped Nachnis regain their self-esteem and raise their collective voices. The Nachnis used to be the outcasts, often treated as untouchables. After death, their bodies are often dumped without any rites. Slowly they organised and started articulating their issues and finally get recognition as entertainment workers by the Ministry of Culture, West Bengal in 2008. Durbar provided them with support and helped them organise their own collective. Over a period of time 'Manbhum Lik Sanskriti Kendra' came out as a platform of folk artisans.

Durbar purchased a piece of land in Purulia and constructed a house and residential accommodation for aged Nachnis in addition to providing office space and amenities to run organisational activities of Nachnis.

## Campaigning against early marriage through street plays

Amra Padatik the organization by and for the children of sex workers decided to carry out a series of Street Play in various red light districts across West Bengal focusing on early child marriage. It is expected that the performance will show some direction to combat early marriage among the community as the street play which depicted the practical situation in any red light district. The uniqueness of this street play was to provide a space to interact with the audience and to carry out some discussion on those issues.

The primary objective of this series of street play is to start dialoguing with the community on early marriage linking the issue with education and aspiration building. It is expected that these street play will help sensitize community members.

“Our sole aim is to develop a scope for dialogue between the community and other stakeholders on early marriage linking it with the career building opportunities” said RatanDolui, Assistant Secretary of AmraPadatik.

Plays performed in Khiddirpur, Seoraphuli, Shantipur, Kalna and Basirhat where local stakeholders including Councillors, School teachers and DISTRICT Legal Service Authority representative were also present which created enthusiasm among the community.

In every red light district on an average more than 200 spectators attended and observed the performance. The spectators questioned about various social norms and there were situations participants started debating among themselves. While the representatives of the mothers blamed the love and affair relationship of the children where children appears to be clueless about their future. The play created a scope to discuss about love and relationship building during among adolescence boys and girls.

### **Sex Workers represented in the State committee of the Trade Union Coordination Centre (TUCC)**

Trade Union Coordination Centre is one of the 12 central trade union of the country who follow socialist ideology. Previously it was affiliated to the Political party named Forward Block but recently the union decided to delink their identity from the political party and restructured various functional committees with a new leadership.

West Bengal State Committee decided to include representative of the unorganized workers as office bearers. Ms. Bharati Dey, Mentor and ex Secretary of Durbar was selected in the State Committee of TUCC representing unorganized women workers in the union. “The state committee is keen to include the informal sector which is the major workforce of the country. Bharati as a women representing informal worker has been included in our state committee” said Mr. Rabindranath Chakraborty, President of the State Committee.

This is yet another feather to Durbar’s cap where a sex worker has been recognized as worker by a Central Trade Union of the country. This is a step forward to the recognition of sex workers as worker. “As an informal worker I have experienced violence and exploitation and has observed the apathy of the trade union to organize informal workers In this backdrop, this is indeed a progressive step by TUCC.” Said Ms. Bharati Dey.

### **Campaign for inclusion of maternity entitlements**

Motherhood is a cherish able experience and it has always been tagged as a “noble” part of the life cycle of Woman. Responsibility of child bearing and rearing has always been put on the shoulders of the women. Side by side motherhood also involve temporary loss of earning capacity, health and nutritional hazards for the mother and child.

In formal sector Maternity Benefit Act 1969 provides maternity benefit for the women workers but informal women workers do not have any opportunity to get such kind of benefit and entitlement. In India only 4% of the women workers are covered by maternity benefit act while majority of the women workers are unprotected in the country.

The National Campaign pressed for the inclusion of maternity related entitlements. Earmarked under National Food Security act Binodindi Sramik Union (the trade union wing of Durbar), as a core member of Karmajibi Mahila Parisad and Right To Food and Work Campaign West Bengal is sensitizing and mobilizing women on the issue with simultaneously doing advocacy with the Government for implementation of the provision articulated in the act. So far 8 deputations have been submitted in various Local Administration offices (Block Development Office, Corporation and Municipality Office) with initiative from Binodini and Durbar.



On 5<sup>th</sup> January 2017, Binodini Sramik Union organized a street meeting with the women construction workers, domestic workers near Bidhannagar Road Railway station. More than 60 women workers belonging to their occupation came to know about it and were enthusiastic to join the movement. The leaders of the campaign Committee vowed to continue their movement to keep pressure on the Government.

### Observing Sabar Adhikar Dibosh in Amlasole

Birsha Munda Gram Unnayan Committee with active support from Durbar Mahila Samanwaya Committee celebrated a four dayslong event in Amlasole on the occasion of Sobar Adhikar Dibosh. The main attraction of the cultural events 27<sup>th</sup> December 30<sup>th</sup> December is supporting Adhikar Dibosh in Medinipur. This held in two Medinipur namely



Dibosh. The main program was sports, which was initiated on 2016 and continued till 2016. Since 2005 Durbar celebration of Sabar Amlasole, West time the program was locations of West Lagadori and Amlasole.

The inaugural program was held at Lagadori on 27<sup>th</sup> December 2016 with a knock out football tournament. A total of 16 football team representing Sabar, Munda and Lodha communities participated in the competition. Hundreds of men, women, and children arrived at the ground to lend their support for respective teams. Various eminent personalities like member of the Gram Panchayat, representatives of Sabar Community etc were present in the program.

On 28<sup>th</sup> the day was started with a traditional **pata dance**, a very popular dance in Munda community. Games like breaking the pot, 200 meter race, 100 meter race, 800 meter race, musical chair, biscuit race, magic show, go as you like, making leaf plates etc were arranged to make the event interesting and exciting.

Simultaneously, on the same day programs were held at Amlasole. The remaining 8 teams of the football league took place there and the final was held on 30<sup>th</sup> December which was attended by thousands of villagers all across the region with zeal and enthusiasm.

On 29<sup>th</sup> December along with sports like musical chair, spoon race etc archery tournament was the main attraction of the day. A total of 100 competitors participated in the Archery Competition.

ON 30<sup>th</sup> December, 2017 the final match of football and archery competition took place where men, women and children arrived at the ground to cheer the participants. Apart from Dr. Smarajit Jana (Chief Advisor, Durbar), Ms. Madhulina Jana (Well wisher of Durbar) and Kojal Basu (Secretary, Durbar) and various other eminent personalities like Hadu Singh Mura (Secretary) of Amlasole Yuva Kalyan Samity, Sukhdev Sabar (Assistant Secretary), representatives of Birsha Munda Gram



Unnayan Committee, Panchayat Pradhan and Block President were also present and handed over prizes to winning participants. The program came to an end with a popular **pata dance** performed by the men and women of Sabar and Munda community.

### **Life Skill Education Module.....for Adolescents**

West Bengal State Commission for Protection of Child Rights in collaboration with Goal India and its partner organisations namely Durbar Mahila Samanwaya Committee, Development Action Society, City Level Program of Action launched a Life Skill Education Module 'Bachte khelay' on 21 at Golden Tulip, I. The module of a 1 year effort wise processes. evolved as a to the needs and vulnerable difficult and circumstances environments step processes. followed were



discussion, Role play & Games with the volunteers (children of sex workers from Sonagachi & Khidirpore) with the help of participatory approach on the focusing area such as-problems facing in adolescent, condition & situation of their home to continue education, ways of passing their leisure time, myths & misconceptions centring around with menstruation, ways of solving problem & difficulties. The module focuses on 10 core Life Skills (Self Awareness, Empathy, Effective communication, Interpersonal Relationship, Critical Thinking, Creative Thinking, Decision Making, Problem Solving, Coping with Emotion, Coping with Stress) which are of utmost importance in negotiating and navigating issues and challenges adolescent often encountered in his/her life.

The module was released by Dr. Sashi Paja (Women & Child Development Minister). IAS Richa Sharma (Directorate of Labor Department), Prof. Ananya Chakraborty (Chairperson SCPCR), ADM North 24 Pgs, representatives from DMSC, Hope Foundation, Vikranshila and CINI were present in the program.

Sikhi-Khelay December 2016 Salt Lake, Sector- was an outcome following step The module natural corollary aspirations of adolescents in challenging and following step by Methods Group

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